

Policy implementation: A Tool for Enhancing Tourism Development in Ghana

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Abstract

Examined in this study is the extent to which the tourism sector has contributed to the economy of Ghana, using the concept of implementation as the theoretical framework. The paper begins by providing an overview of theoretical considerations underlying tourism policy using an implementation model. The scholarly arguments surrounding the concept of tourism are then dissected. An assessment of policy interventions to boost the tourism industry is done. The study reveals that the tourism sector has made significant contribution to the economy of Ghana, though certain challenges persist. The paper recommends that robust policies be designed and effectively implemented to enhancing tourism development in Ghana.

Key words: Tourism development, implementation, tourist destinations, economic development

1.0 Methodology

Qualitative research design was used through the collection and examination of relevant documents. An analysis of existing documents and statistical sources from Ghana Tourist Board and the Ministry of Tourism was done. This technique is appropriate, since documents are non-reactive, and for that reason the possible biases which are often recognized to derive from interviews and questionnaires are removed (Bryman, 2006).

2.0 Conceptual Framework-Policy Implementation

It has been observed that the success of public administration depends on effective implementation of public policy. Edwards (1980) defines policy implementation as a stage of policy making between the establishment of a policy (such as the passage of a legislative act, the issuing of an executive order, or the promulgation of a regulatory rule) and the consequences of the policy for the people whom it affects. Milakovich & Gordon (2001) define public policy as the organizing framework of purposes and rationale for government programs that deal with specific societal problems. Anderson (1975) argues that a policy is a purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of concern. Dror (1989) on the other hand, points out that policies are general directives on the main lines of action to be followed.

Policies are therefore processes or series or patterns of governmental activities or decisions that are designed to remedy some public problem, either real or imagined. They are formulated, implemented and evaluated by actors in

a political system, for example, judges, legislators, executives and administrators. Public policies are subject to change on the basis of new or better information about their effects. Given the relevance of implementation to the success of public administration, an appropriate implementation of tourism policy can have a profound effect on socio-economic development in Ghana. Implementation primarily means to carry out, to accomplish, to fulfill, or to actualize a plan. This meaning could easily be equated with the accomplishment of tourism policies. Policy implementation is regarded as the accomplishment of policy objectives through the planning and programming of operations and projects so that agreed upon outcomes and desired impacts are achieved in order to enhance socio-economic development.

Public policy is therefore the focal point of government activity. Public-policy on tourism must be seen in terms of a political activity (Hall, 2000, pp. 10-15). Public policy is influenced by the economic, social and cultural characteristics of society, as well as by the formal structures of government and other features of the political system. Policy should therefore be seen as a consequence of the political environment, values and ideologies, the distribution of power, institutional frameworks and of decision-making processes (Hall and Jenkins, 1995). Policy involves consideration of the 'political debate about what the agenda is, what the issues are, who is involved or affected, and the alternative courses of action to address the problems' (Dredge & Jenkins, 2007, p. 10). This reinforces the fact that the government has a critical role to play in implementation of tourism policy. The government can be conceptualized as a set of officials with their own preferences and capacities to affect public policy, or in more structural terms as a relatively permanent set of political institutions operating in relation to civil society (Nordlinger, 1981).

Stretching this argument further, policy on tourism development must take into consideration the various stakeholders and institutions involved in tourism development. These stakeholders and institutions include elected politicians, the various arms of the bureaucracy, un-elected public/civil servants, and the plethora of rules, regulations, laws, conventions and policies which surround government and private action. The main institutions of the state involved in implementation of tourism policies are: the legislature, government departments and authorities, the judiciary, enforcement agencies, other levels of government, government-business enterprises and corporations, regulatory authorities and a range of para-state organizations, such as labour organizations (Hall and Jenkins, 1995). These institutions and actors can critically play a leading role in promoting the tourism sector for socio-economic development.

Policy has also been seen as a social process that involves and is influenced by the institutional context, issue drivers such as macro-environment factors, actors, agencies and networks, policy dialogues, and events, as well as space and time (Lawrence & Dredge, 2007, p. 16). An increasingly important view associated with the ideology of neo-liberalism is that policy communities or networks of interested stakeholders play an important part in the development of issues and policy formulation processes. Thus some authors stress that policy making is a 'soft' human process rather than a rational scientific process. Stevenson (2008, p. 744) indicates 'tourism policy is essentially about communication'. Policies are formulated and implemented in dynamic environments where there is

a complex pattern of decisions, actions, interaction, reaction, and feedback. Extending this argument even further, we may argue that policy cannot be separated from implementation although this may also be interpreted as defining effective policy – that is, policy is enacted.

Clearly, the factors which either promote or impinge on the effort to expand the tourism sector include but not limited to the institutional framework for tourism development in Ghana such as the Ministry of Tourism, the Ghana Tourist Board, Ghana Immigration Service, Ghana Police Service, the Ghana Private Road Transport Union, visitor attractions, the modus operandi of these institutions, infrastructural challenges, sanitation problems, security issues, travel agents, investment in services delivered by airlines, hotels, rental car companies, and so on. Governments shape the economic framework for the tourism industry, they provide the infrastructure and educational requirements for tourism, establish the regulatory environment in which business operates, and take an active role in promoting and marketing the tourism sector. In addition, tourism may be politically and economically appealing to government because it can potentially give the appearance of producing results from policy initiatives in a short period of time in terms of visitor numbers and or employment generation (Hall and Jenkins, 1998; Jenkins et al. 1998).

3.0 Literature Review

Over the past three decades, the need for tourism development has featured prominently in public policy discourse in Ghana. This debate has arisen due to the potential of the tourism industry to shift the economic paradigm of the country from the production of raw materials to a service-based economy. The country largely depends on some few commodities, mainly, cocoa, and gold, to earn the needed revenue to support the various developmental agenda of government. Incontrovertibly, the tourism industry can play a significant role in the economy of Ghana in the areas of revenue mobilization and employment generation. Despite, the positive association between tourism industry and employment generation, there has not been concomitant increase in research to support this assertion.

Notwithstanding the critical role played by tourism in economic development, there has been little investigation on how the sector can contribute more significantly to the economy of Ghana. Tourism has been identified as one of the fastest growing industries in the world. In both developed and developing countries governments have identified tourism as a means of generating employment and revenue mobilization. It is in this context that Ghana has placed tourism as a major component of its economic policy management.

Considering the importance of tourism, crafting appropriate policies and implementing such policies to enhance the tourism sector is in order. It is within this context that most countries in the world recognize tourism as a way to diversify their economies and for that matter create corresponding tourism programmes and strategies to support the industry. Tourism can provide a multitude of benefits for governments, including attracting outside investors, creating jobs and earning foreign currency to help with a country's trade balance. Governments also benefit when tourism enhances an area's international, national and regional reputation, which in turn can attract additional investment while fostering a sense of pride of place, culture and history among their citizenry.

The tourism sector has huge economic and social significance. Given Ghana's outstanding wealth of natural reserves and rich cultural heritage, the country stands in a good position to use this opportunity to its advantage. Despite the emerging importance of tourism development to economic growth, tourism has not featured prominently in the

development literature. Some few scholars on the subject have focused their studies on the broader context of development. Extensive work has not been done on tourism development in Ghana. Butler (1997: 121) argues that the process of development of tourist destinations has received little attention in the literature, and conceptualization of the process has been very limited. It is perhaps in this light that Ritchie (1993: 214-5) contends that “tourism academics have a major contribution to the development of knowledge in the field.” One major work was done by the Hoff and Overgaard Planning Consultants in 1974. The Report was based on infrastructural potential on the tourism industry. The main findings indicated that Ghana has about the same assets seen from a touristic point of view as most other countries located along the coast of Senegal to Benin which Ghana would have to compete with. It further pointed out that Ghana seems to have more and better possibilities than other West African countries.

Tourism is often seen as having great potential in developing countries which have substantial natural resources to attract tourists (Bird, 1992). For developing countries facing falling and erratic prices for their exports, tourism can bring substantial benefits, increasing foreign exchange earnings and contributing to a diversification of earnings that may lessen the volatility of export earnings overall (Sinclair & Tsegaye, 1990; Sinclair, 1999; Durbarry, 2002; Lea, 1993). In many developing countries tourism is the main, or one of the most important, exports exports (Sinclair, 1991a; Dieke, 1993; Varley, 1978; Curry, 1992; Mudambi, 1994; Archer, 1995). However, the benefits from tourism for developing countries may be constrained by import leakages (Sinclair, 1991a; Telfer & Wall, 1996), the need for foreign investment in hotel development and hence repatriation of earnings (Kaslavan & Karamustafa, 2001) as well as environmental damage (Faulkner, 1998).

The importance of tourism in both developed and developing countries can be understood in terms of concrete steps being taken by those countries in developing their tourist industries. The primary rationale for such steps has always been the huge economic benefits which tourism can contribute to the countries. The economic benefits include, but not limited to foreign exchange earnings and employment generation. Foreign exchange can be earned through two kinds of exports: visible and invisible exports. Visible exports are physical goods which can be seen, weighed and touched as they pass through the ports of one country. On the other hand, invisible exports are not physical goods, but services provided by one country for another. An essential feature of tourism industry is its capacity to create employment for large numbers of people of different skills and levels of ability. The tourism industry is also not capital intensive, as it depends largely on people who work in it as opposed to machinery and technology. Tourism generates considerable employment, both directly in the sectors in which tourist expenditure occurs and more widely, via, inter-industry linkages.

Given the significance of tourism development to Ghana’s socio-economic advancement, a robust public policy for tourism enhancement is of utmost relevance. Government has had an entrepreneurial function in tourism. Governments not only provide basic infrastructure, such as roads and sewage, but also own and operate tourist ventures, including hotels and travel companies. Governments in Ghana at all levels have had a long history of involvement in promoting tourism through bureau, marketing ventures, development of transport networks through national airline and rail systems.

Governments play several roles in tourism: they provide legislation and regulation regarding the way visitors should be received and served and the rules that visitors must follow; they act for the general promotion of tourism to the

country or to a specific region; they develop the instruments that make the evaluation of the tourism policies possible; they maintain order and security so that tourism may occur; they maintain the space that is in the public domain, etc. They also provide a certain number of services that have already been mentioned, such as education, health and cultural services at prices that are not economically significant and from which visitors might also benefit.

It is acknowledged that tourism has become a major foreign exchange earner to the Ghanaian economy in recent years. With the introduction of the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) in 1983, there has been a steady increase in the numbers of tourist arrivals in the country. A developed tourism industry stands to make an immense contribution to the country's economic programme. Tourism thus is a potential area which could considerably contribute to foreign exchange earnings.

4.0 Examination of Tourism Implementation Policy in Ghana

Given the preponderance of abject poverty in Ghana, coupled with high unemployment, it is important to critically examine the potential benefits of tourism to save this country from its present economic predicament. Having journeyed from structural adjustment programme (SAP), to highly indebted poor country (HIPC) and now metamorphosed into middle income country, sustaining the current level of economic development rests on a robust and well-integrated approach to tourism enhancement. The argument for tourism enhancement is further justified given the fact that poor macroeconomic performance of Africa is growing and the various explanations for the performance vary from external conditions, colonial history, heavy dependence on primary products, past economic policies, demographic change, lack of financial depth, deficient public service provision, social conditions (Sachs and Warner, 1997; Bloom and Sachs, 1998; Collier and Cunning, 1998), tourism development becomes a viable option for socio-economic development in Africa.

Recognizing the critical role played by tourism policy to facilitate socio-economic development in Ghana, in 2008, the Ministry of Tourism undertook various project to promote tourism in general, including domestic tourism. Among other things, it inspected and monitored accommodation and catering establishments throughout the country to ensure that they met the requisite standards. Ghana is blessed with attractive sites yet most of these sites are underdeveloped (ISSER, 2008). Despite the challenges that the tourism industry encountered as a result of the global financial crisis, the tourism sector continues to be the third largest foreign exchange earner for the economy. The tourism industry also continues to be one of the fastest growing industries of the economy of Ghana. This was attested to by a general increase in international arrivals in Ghana for the year 2009. International arrivals for the purposes of visiting family and/or friends recorded the highest growth rate of 24 per cent. In addition, international arrivals for business activities have grown 23 per cent since 2008 (ISSER, 2009).

According to the budget statement of 2012, the Ghana Tourism Authority which aims at promoting sustainable tourism development has been established by the enactment of the Tourism Act 817. The Act provides for the establishment of the Tourism Development Fund to provide Funding for tourism and tourism-related projects and programmes (Budget Statement, 2012). In line with the goal of making Ghana the preferred tourist destination in Africa, the Ministry of Tourism participated in seven (7) international tourism exhibitions in key markets overseas. The Ministry also organised four (4) major events to boost international and domestic tourism in the country namely;

the National Chocolate Day Celebration, the 5th Okwahu Hang & Paragliding Festival, Emancipation Day Celebration and the World Tourism Day to promote domestic and international tourism in the country (National Development Planning Commission, 2010). The international tourism investment forum was also organised to facilitate investments in the sector (National Development Planning Commission, 2010).

In ensuring that hospitality service providers maintain standards and improved service delivery to tourists in the country, the Ghana Tourist Board conducted inspections, and licensed tourism plants in all regions. About 75% of the targeted 6,000 units in both formal and informal sectors were covered under re-inspections and mid-year inspections. The Board re-inspected 4,500 accommodation and catering units in both formal and informal sectors. The UNIDO-UNWTO Demonstration project at Ada, which is aimed at reducing environmental impacts from coastal tourism as well as promoting eco-tourism to improve living conditions of the communities in Ada took off with training programmes for all stakeholders from the community (National Development Planning Commission, 2010).

Table 1: Tourist arrivals and earnings from tourism trade, 1991-2004

Years	Total Tourist Arrivals	% Change in Arrivals	Total Earnings	% Change in Earnings (\$ million)
1991	172,464	18.3	117.70	45.6
1992	213,316	23.7	166.90	41.8
1993	256,680	20.3	205.62	23.2
1994	271,310	5.7	227.60	10.7
1995	286,000	5.4	233.20	2.5
1996	304,860	6.6	248.80	6.7
1997	325,438	6.7	265.59	6.7
1998	347,952	6.9	283.96	6.9
1999	372,653	7.1	304.12	7.1
2000	399,000	7.1	386.00	26.9
2001	438,833	10.0	447.83	16.0
2002	482,643	10.0	519.57	16.0
2003	550,000	14.0	602.80	13.4
2004	583,821	5.8	649.37	7.1

Source: Ghana Tourist Board

Table 1 shows the distribution of tourist arrivals and earnings from the tourism sector during the period- 1991-2004. The table gives a positive picture of Ghana as an attractive tourist destination in the West-African Sub-Region. In 1997 for instance, tourist arrivals in Ghana amounted to 325, 483 and the figure rose to 583, 821 in 2004. The earnings from the tourist sector have also been increasing, although the percentage change has been erratic. In

2000, the percentage change in earnings amounted to 26.9 per cent while that of 2004 was 7.1. In 2006, the contribution of the tourism sector to Gross Domestic Product amounted to 5.8 percent, while Gross Foreign exchange earnings amounted to US\$987 million (Ghana Tourist Board). The increase in terms of tourist arrivals and earnings cannot easily be explained in terms of any robust public policies pursued by the central government. What is obvious is that, Ghana has been peaceful, stable and enjoying consistent economic progress. The neighbouring countries have been in a political turmoil and this situation has served as major disincentive to attract tourists to those countries. It is important for Ghana to capitalize on its competitive advantage to craft policies and implement the policies to expand its tourism sector.

Table 2: Employment in the tourism sector, 2005-2009

Year	Direct	Indirect	Total	% Growth
2005	49,757	123,066	172,823	-
2006	52,742	130,450	183,192	6.0
2007	59,335	146,756	206,091	12.5
2008	67,051	167,628	234,679	13.9
2009	75,765	187,392	263,157	12.1

Source: Ghana Tourist Board

The tourism sector's role in employment generation is quite significant. Table 2 shows the distribution of employment generation from the tourism sector during the period 2005-2009. The most significant feature of tourism industry is its capacity to generate large scale employment opportunities. The sector generated employment to the tune of 206, 091 in 2007 and increased by 13.9 percent to 234, 679 in 2008. There was a further increase by 12.1 percent to 263,157 in 2009. It must be noted that employment does not necessarily expand as tourist expenditure increases because it depends on the state of the local economy, the nature of the tourism activity and degree of change in demand. Thus employment multipliers are only an indication of possible full-time employment which may result. Yet, it is not just the number of jobs created, but the type and quality resulting from tourism that are important (Mathieson and Wall, 1982).

Having chalked some successes, the tourism sector is bedeviled with some serious problems. Poor sanitation is a major concern to tourists. It is evident that poor sanitation and hygiene cause diseases which lead to premature deaths and a wide range of direct and indirect economic effects. It stands to reason that neighbourhoods with poor sanitation are less pleasant to tourists, thus poor sanitation affects the attractiveness of tourist destinations and arrivals. Policies to address poor sanitation in urban centres in Ghana have been ineffective, and for the government to achieve the maximum benefit from the tourism sector, the issue of sanitation must be seriously tackled.

The capacity of the government as conceptualised in general systems thinking terms as the structural, functional and cultural ability to implement tourism policy objectives has not been forthcoming. The unavailability of and access to concrete or tangible resources such as human, financial, material, technological, logistical etc to boost the tourism has been a major drawback. Coupled with this is the inability to provide the requisite leadership, motivation, commitment, willingness, endurance, and other intangible attributes needed to transform rhetoric into action. The political, administrative, economic, technological, cultural and social environments within which action is taken have been unsympathetic to successful implementation of tourism policy (Grindle 1980). This assertion buttresses Egonmwan's (1971) argument that implementation in African countries often turns out to be the graveyard of policy where the intentions of the designer of policies are often undermined by a constellation of powerful forces of politics and administration in cooperation with people.

The critical role of infrastructure in tourism development, and economic growth, and social development is widely recognized by governments, development agencies, multilateral organizations and private sector. Sub-Saharan Africa trails other regions in nearly all aspects of physical infrastructure. Most roads in Ghana are poorly maintained and often unpaved, and truck fleets generally consist of aging, fuel-inefficient vehicles that are often overloaded and contribute to further road degradation. Poor roads and truck breakdowns result in the slow movement of people to their destinations. Electricity infrastructure in Ghana is least developed, least accessible, and least reliable. The unreliability of electricity serves as a major disincentive to attract tourists to Ghana. The share of people with access to electricity is much lower in sub-Saharan Africa than in other regions, and in rural areas access to safe water and improved sanitation, critical for using food is also lower. The share of paved roads is 18% in sub-Saharan Africa, compared with 33% in Latin America and 59% in South Asia. Moreover, only 30% of the rural population in sub-Saharan Africa lives within 2 kilometres of an all-season road, which is just over half the shares for Latin America and the Caribbean (54%) and South Asia (58%). The issue of infrastructural deficit must be given the required attention in order to foster tourism development.

5.0 Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

There is a need for a new strategy to tourism development in Ghana. This new approach calls for a vigorous partnership between the public and the private sector. The ability of the government to develop workable mechanisms of both the public and private sectors to work together is crucial for sustainable tourism development. Government may enter into partnership with the private sector in order to develop certain products, locations or regions. These may take the form of a corporation which has a specific mandate to attract businesses to certain areas, for example, often through the provision of infrastructure or tax incentives. This should be supported by a supportive regulatory frame work which will accelerate the pace of tourism development in Ghana.

It is recommended that the government as a matter of urgency has to design appropriate policies and strategies to address the poor sanitation problem in the cities of Ghana. Infrastructural development must also be considered seriously. Tourism infrastructure has the uppermost likelihood of generating economic returns and the tourism sector investment is therefore infrastructure that facilitates efficient and affordable access to areas with critical mass of tourism products.

Using appropriate regulatory instruments for a wide variety of purposes especially at local government, for instance, restraining undesirable uses, setting materials standards for tourism development can enhance tourism development.

Mills and Morrison (1985) postulate that government can stimulate tourism development in three ways. These include financial incentives such as low interest loans, through sponsoring research for the general benefit of the tourism industry rather than for specific individual organization and marketing and promotion so as to generate tourism demand. Ascher (1984) also holds the view that one of the main activities of government is the promotion of tourism through tourism marketing campaigns. Government may encourage tourism development by allocating financial resources to monitor economic, environmental and socio-economic indicators. Such measures may not only be valuable to government to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of tourism planning and development policies and objectives but can also be a valuable source of information to the private sector as well. Government can also spend some funds on promoting a region with huge tourism potentials.

The public-private partnership arrangement must be supplemented by an open system that allows for a wide range of groups such as academicians, business groups, social interest groups, unions to provide useful feedback on direction of the tourism sector.

Sports tourism is another innovative way in which tourism development can be enhanced through implementation of appropriate public policies. Special sporting events have emerged as major tourism policy instruments for governments keen to boost local business as a result of visitor spending (Mules, 1998). Sports events refer to tourism where the prime purpose of the trip is to take part in sports events, either as a participant or a spectator. There is unquestionably a wide range of impacts resulting from sports tourism provision, of which economic impact is perhaps the most obvious. According to Law (1993: 97), mega-events like hosting of African Cup of Nations and FIFA World Cup, have a major impact on the image of the host city. Broadly, sports tourism is a dynamic and expanding sector of the tourism economy, and by definition, this is attractive economically. Sports-related facilities and events can generate visitors from outside the local area, which generates economic benefit locally from sales of accommodation, food, beverages, gifts, admission fees, other spending at facilities and use of transport.

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